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ABSTRACT

Project PRIDE (Providing Resources and Information Designed to Educate) is an after school tutorial program for approximately 70 grade 7 to 9 Hispanic junior high school students attending the School District of the City of Saginaw. The project is intended to provide an after school center for help with school work. The instructional goals include completion of regular assignments, basic skill development, career awareness and career search skills, test taking skills, and exposure to computer assisted instruction and technology. The staff consists of a supervisor, a coordinator, 3 teachers, a school liaison person, a counselor, 2 parent advocates, 2 part-time computer teachers, 2 drivers, and 12 paid student tutors. Additionally, students participate in activities for which appropriate adult role models are provided. During the program year studied the process objectives were all met within designated time limits; the product objectives were also fully met. All other indicators demonstrated that participation in Project PRIDE was a predictor of improved attendance and improved grade point averages. Participation in the project can also be a predictor of fewer suspensions, staying in school, and improved citizenship. (ABL)

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EVALUATION REPORT

PROJECT PRIDE

1989-90

DEPARTMENT OF EVALUATION SERVICES

- PROVIDING ASSESSMENT, PROGRAM EVALUATION AND RESEARCH SERVICES -

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SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF SAGINAW

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Saginaw, Michigan

PROJECT PRIDE

1989-90

An Approved Report of the
DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL
Department of Evaluation, Testing, and Research

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INTRODUCTION

Project PRIDE (Providing Resources and Information Designed to Educate) is an after school tutorial program for 7-9 grade Hispanic students attending the School District of the City of Saginaw. It is a cooperative and collaborative effort between Saginaw Public Schools, Tri-City SER/Jobs for Progress and the American GI Forum Women's Chapter of Saginaw.

The project is intended to provide approximately 70 at-risk Hispanic junior high students with an after school center where they can go to receive help with their school work. The program utilizes a structured tutorial approach that focuses on the following instructional goals:

- Completion of regular assignments,
- Basic skill development,
- Career awareness and career search skills,
- Test taking skills, and
- Exposure to computer assisted instruction and technology.

Individualized help is achieved through the use of hired student tutors who are supervised by teachers.

Hispanic junior high students were chosen as the target population because, based on grade point averages, attendance figures and dropout statistics. The Hispanic school population, especially at the junior high level, represents the highest need group within the school district.

Specific need areas for the target population are:

- Low levels of basic skills and academic achievement;
- Low levels of study skills and ability to complete assignments;
- High rates of students dropping out;
- Lack of educational and career goals;
- Lack of an awareness of, and preparation for emerging and future careers;
- Inconsistency between home and school environments; and
- High rates of personal, social-emotional and home-school problems.

The staff consisted of one supervisor, one coordinator, three teachers, one school liaison, one counselor, two parent advocates, two part-time computer teachers, two drivers and twelve paid student tutors.

The project is organized around the following objectives:

- To interview and hire project personnel;
- To provide training for the project staff;
- To select seventy at-risk Hispanic junior high students;
- To conduct basic skill development and/or remediation in reading, mathematics and writing;
- To provide students with career exploration and career skill opportunities;
- To offer parent awareness and involvement activities;
- To decrease the number of Hispanic students who drop out of school in grades 7, 8 and 9 and;
- To decrease the number of personal, social-emotional and home-school problems.

The next section of this report will address the evaluation of activities designed to meet these objectives.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

This evaluation can be divided into two phases, the process and the product evaluations. The process evaluation is an ongoing monitoring activity that takes place during the functioning of the program and attempts to answer, "Is the project being implemented as planned?". The product evaluation is conducted at the end of the project and it attempts to answer the question, "Did the project have the outcomes or products that were intended?"

As a result of the process evaluation activities, it is expected that this phase of the evaluation will help staff to identify and solve problems with implementing the project goals. The process evaluation involved observations of activities; interviews with the supervisor, the director, the teaching staff, the Manager of Federal Programs and other school personnel; and confirmation of project activities through assessment of various documents.

The product evaluation focused on the outcomes of improved student attendance, academics and citizenship, and decreases in participants' dropout and suspension rates. Student attendance was assessed through the use of attendance records. Student academic progress was evaluated by monitoring six-week student grade point averages. Citizenship information was obtained from reports provided by project staff. Dropout and suspension data were found in school records.

The next section of this report will describe the process evaluation findings and outcomes.

PROCESS EVALUATION FINDINGS

Funding for Project PRIDE was approved on October 23, 1989. PRIDE activities began with the selection and training of staff. The project objectives were used as a guide for planning activities. The following sections contain descriptions of the activities that were used to implement the program objectives. This represents the process evaluation part of the report.

Interview And Hire Project Personnel

The staff personnel were to be in place by November 3, 1989. Interviews were conducted and appropriate staff selected as provided for by the grant language. All staffing was in place by the deadline date.

This process objective was met.

Provide Training For The Project Staff On Goals, Objectives, Activities, Procedures And Project Operations

All training was to be overseen by the coordinator and was to take place by November 10, 1989. This training took place as scheduled. A training manual was prepared by the supervisor and was used to guide the training activities. This manual also served as a policy/procedure document for the ongoing activities of the project. Pre-service training sessions were held on November 21, 1989. The required training was accomplished within a reasonable time limit of the target date.

This process objective was met.

Select Seventy At-Risk Hispanic Junior High Students

Initially 107 at-risk Hispanic students were identified as needing services. The criteria for identification focused on student grades from the

first six week marking period. Students who had one E and multiple D's or who had two or more E's were selected for participation. Letters explaining the project and inviting these students to take part were sent to the parents of these at-risk students on November 7, 1989. Parents were invited and encouraged to come to the first session to enroll their student and to sign various consent forms. This meeting was held on November 14, 1989. From the identified students, 87 Hispanic students were recruited for participation in the project. Of these, fourteen were seventh graders, thirty were eighth graders and forty-three were ninth graders.

This process objective was met.

Conduct Basic Skills Development And/Or Remediation In Reading, Mathematics And Writing

The program was divided into four classrooms, one for each of the three grade levels being served and a computer room. A teacher and three to four tutors were assigned to each classroom. The computer room had two teachers and at least one aide. Basic skill development was provided through a peer tutoring system that enlisted the help of student tutors who were at least a grade or two ahead of participants. Each tutor was assigned four to six students to work with. Students were grouped according to their skill level and their areas of need. The tutors were supervised by the classroom teacher, who also oversaw the learning plan for each student and tutored as well. The teachers were also responsible for planning other activities and maintaining records on student attendance and progress.

Additional basic skill work for students was accomplished through the use of the computer programs available at the site. Two additional teachers helped students in this area. Each classroom had the computer area available to them once a week. Special computer aided instruction programs for language

and math were used by the students to improve their skills.

Individual student needs were identified and addressed by the teachers and tutors. Individual reports were developed for each student.

The process portion of this objective was met.

Provide Students With Career Exploration And Career Skills Opportunities

Letters were sent to Hispanic organizations to recruit volunteers to speak on various career opportunities. This effort provided the participants with positive role models and also to heighten student awareness of skills and information that students should be acquiring as they pursue their education. Ten presentations were made during the project.

The students also received information about careers, employment trends and emerging careers through their regular career classes. These students were given the Holland Self Directed Search and developed a career plan. There were 36 full participants in the program at the end of the project. Twenty-eight of the 36 (78%) took the Holland Self Directed Search.

This process objective was met.

Offer Parent Awareness And Involvement Activities

A number of steps were taken to make parents aware of the program services. An initial letter was sent to all prospective participants. There were four meetings during the project that were aimed at informing parents about the program's progress and their student's participation. Parents were notified by letter about these meetings. Numerous attempts were made to enlist parents as volunteers. Progress reports were sent to parents throughout the project. This process objective was met.

The next section of this report will describe the product evaluation and program outcomes.

PRODUCT EVALUATION FINDINGS

The product evaluation addresses the specific outcomes of the program. In the case of PRIDE, outcomes involved changes in attitudes, attendance, suspensions and grade point averages for participants. The following section will describe the population.

Population

Project PRIDE was designed to meet the needs of at-risk Hispanic students. A list of grades for the first six week marking period of the 1989-90 school year for all Hispanic students was used to identify the population. From this list, students who received at least one E and multiple D's or who received multiple E's were selected for participation in Project Pride. These students were then invited to participate. In all, 107 students were contacted. Of these students, 87 expressed an interest in the program and attended at least one session. Of these students, 53 students remained within the school district for the entire school year and chose to participate in the program.

In all, 107 students in one way or another came to the attention of the project staff. These students can be divided into three distinct groups:

1. Those students who where identified as at-risk, but for one reason or another chose not to participate. There are 65 students in this group. This group of students was not included included in the evaluation.

2. Another group is those students who were identified and who only partially participated in the project. Partial participation is defined as attending the project less than half of 66 project days. Thirty-two students made up this group of students. This group of students was not considered to have received enough services to make any assessments of the effect of this program on their schooling.

3. A third group of students are those that were identified as at-risk and participated in Project Pride. Full participation was identified as having attended more than half of the 66 days. There were 28 students in this group.

Project Objectives

The following sections detail the outcomes on the project's objectives. In each section, the data relevant to objective attainment is presented.

Remediation. The grant specified that improvements were to be made in students' attendance and grade point averages. Attendance records for first and second semester and grade point averages for the second and fifth marking periods (89-90) for each of the 28 students were compared.

It is documented that:

- Twenty (71.4%) demonstrated an increase in attendance; and
- Seventeen (60.7%) demonstrated an increase in grade point averages.

As improvements were documented, this objective was attained.

Dropout Prevention. The criteria for this objective was that 80% of the participants would remain in school during 1989/90. An examination of student attendance records indicate that all 28 (100.0%) did.

The objective was met.

Suspensions. Of the 28 participants, five received short term suspensions during first semester for a total of 42.5 days. Of these same students, three were given short term suspensions during second semester for a total of nine days. As the grant specified there was to be a decrease in the number of long term and short term suspensions; this objective was met.

Citizenship. The grant mandated improvements in student citizenship scores. An examination of the second semester and fifth semester citizenship scores for the 28 students indicate that 25 (89.3%) evidenced an increase, attaining this objective.

SUMMARY

Project PRIDE is a voluntary after school program for junior high at-risk Hispanic students. The central service involves after school tutorial help for participants. Help is also provided in the areas of study skills, career exploration and test-taking skills. Additionally, the students participated in activities in which they were exposed to appropriate adult role models.

The process objectives were all met within the designated time limits. The product objectives were fully met. All other indicators demonstrated that participation in Project PRIDE is a predictor of improved attendance and improved grade point averages. Participation in this project can also be a predictor of fewer suspensions, staying in school and improved citizenship.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Project PRIDE has been successful in meeting all of its process and product objectives. However, there is at least one area in which the project could be improved. It is:

- Project leaders should develop a plan to increase the number of participants who remain in the program through the entire project.